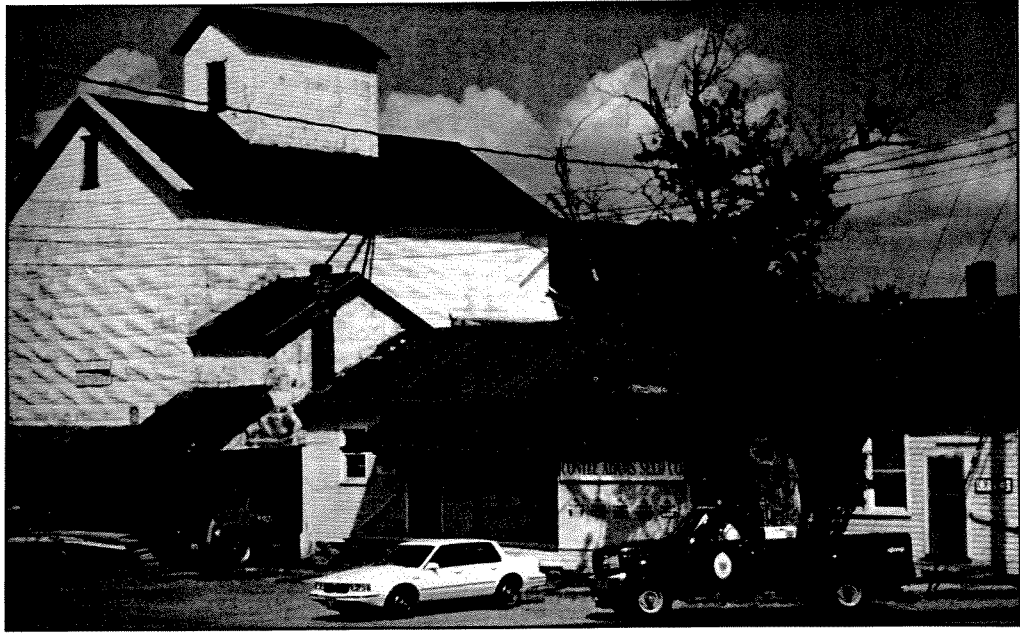


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# CHAPTER 1

## *Introduction*



### *A. Context and Purpose*

The Purcellville Urban Growth Area (UGA) covers approximately 3,100 acres (4.7 square miles) of land surrounding the incorporated Town of Purcellville located in western Loudoun County. This figure does not include the 1300 acres of land located within the Town. The Purcellville UGA is bisected by Route 7 (Business) and is bounded to the north by Route 711, by the Town limits and Route 690 to the west, and extends approximately one-half mile from the corporate limits of the Town to the east and the south (See Figure 1, p. 2).

Throughout its growth and development, the Town of Purcellville has served as the cultural and commercial hub of the surrounding farm community. In the late 1980s the Town and its environs experienced intense pressure for non-agriculturally related development. Despite the current economic recession, development interest in the Purcellville area has continued for a number of reasons. First, improvements to the Town's water treatment system have increased water capacity and availability. Second, the completion of the divided four lane segment of the Route 7 Bypass (Clark's Gap to Round Hill) and construction of the Dulles Toll Road extension (the Dulles Greenway) will strengthen the Purcellville area's transportation linkages to the east and west. Finally, as employment centers in the Washington Metropolitan area continue to edge westward, the Purcellville area is increasingly attractive for commuters seeking a wide range of housing opportunities.



# Purcellville Urban Growth Area Management Plan Base Map

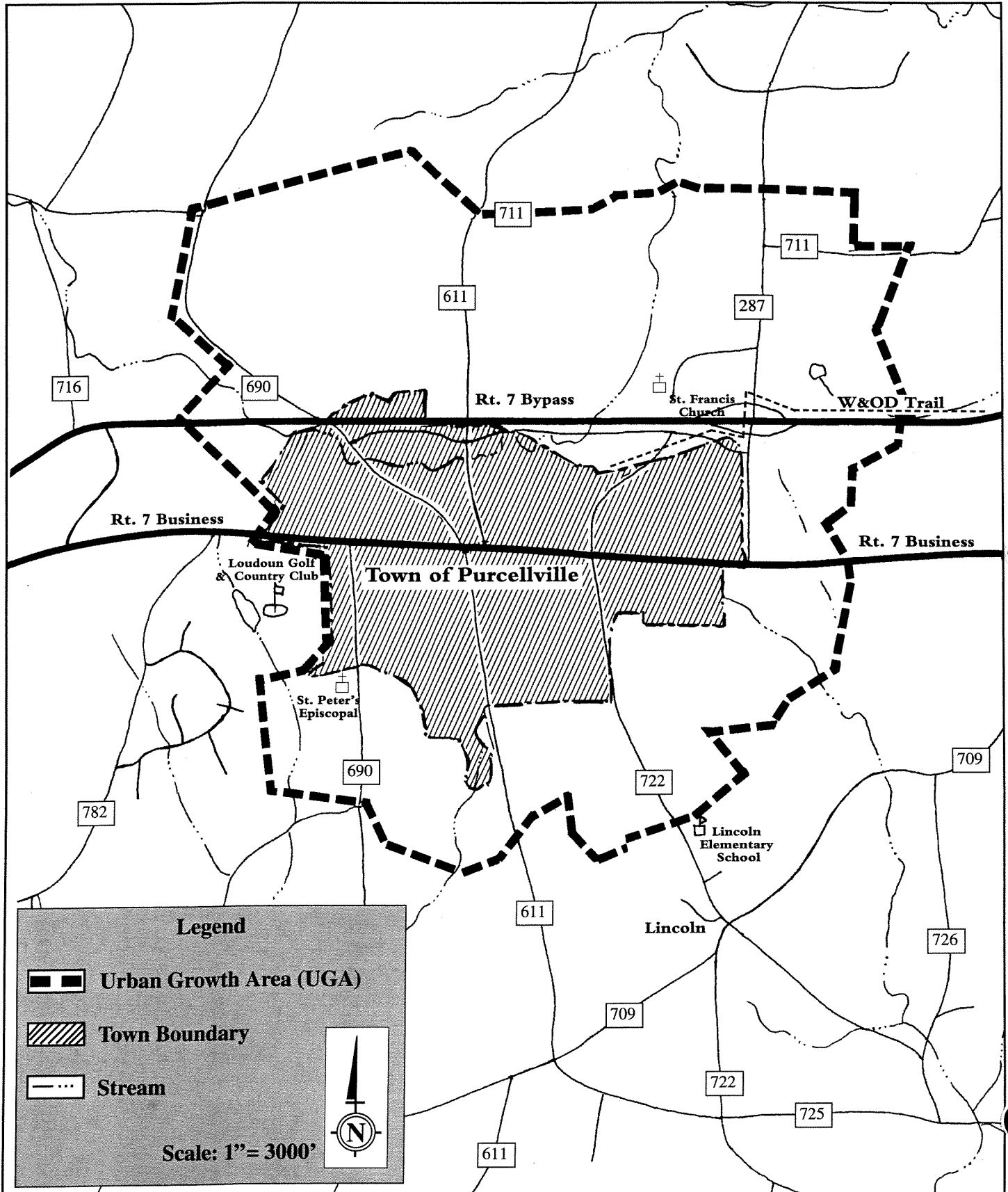


Figure 1.

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In September 1991, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors adopted the ***Choices and Changes: Loudoun County General Plan***. The General Plan provides general direction regarding land use surrounding the Town of Purcellville and also established an Urban Growth Area around the Town. The purpose of Urban Growth Areas is to encourage compact development in and around the County's existing towns where public utilities and services are available or will be available in the future, rather than in rural areas. The General Plan recommends that land in the Urban Growth Area around Purcellville be served with Town sewer and water service and proposes that land in the Urban Growth Area would be a logical area for the Town's growth and expansion over the next 50 years.

The impetus for a detailed ***Purcellville Urban Growth Area Management Plan*** (PUGAMP) grew out of a joint annexation agreement approved by the County and the Town in May 1993 (Appendix A). This agreement, which will allow the Town to annex property in the Purcellville Urban Growth Area as it deems appropriate, specifically requires that the Town and the County prepare a joint comprehensive plan to address land use, development densities, transportation, proffer guidelines and public utilities and facilities. The PUGAMP will provide guidance to the public and private sectors in coordinating land development activity, capital facility investments, utility line extensions, road improvements and similar actions. The plan will also provide a sense of Town and County land use goals and priorities based on comments by residents and landowners in the area.

## ***B. History of the UGA Boundary***

### ***Rural Land Management Plan***

The Purcellville Urban Growth Area Boundary has been the subject of considerable review and discussion for nearly a decade, beginning with the first effort to complete a plan for the area surrounding Purcellville in the mid-1980s. The concept of specific Urban Growth Areas around the towns, however, was initially set out in the policies of the County's 1984 ***Rural Land Management Plan***. To preserve farmland and encourage a compact and efficient development pattern for western Loudoun County, the RLMP recommended that the County establish Urban Growth Areas (UGA) around each of the five largest western towns. The UGAs would be the preferred location for new development in western Loudoun County. The extension of municipal sewer and water lines would also be permitted within the UGAs. The RLMP further stated that UGAs would be established through specific area plans for the towns. In the interim, the RLMP designated the corporate limits of each town as the Urban Limit Line defining the UGA.

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## ***1988 Purcellville Area Management Plan***

A specific Purcellville Area Management Plan effort was initiated in 1986 when the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors appointed a 13 member citizens' committee, at the request of the Purcellville Town Council, to develop a plan for land surrounding the incorporated Town. One of the first tasks of this committee, made up of Town and County residents, was to define the area of influence surrounding the Town of Purcellville and establish a planning area boundary. After reviewing three alternative planning area boundaries developed jointly by County planning staff and the County Planning Commission, the Citizens' Committee established a planning area that extended approximately one mile north and south of the Town and approximately one-half mile to the east and west of the Town. The boundary generally followed property lines, roads or streams. This line constituted the study area for the Purcellville Area Plan.

In 1987, after reviewing several alternatives, the Purcellville Area Management Plan Citizens' Committee established an Urban Limit Line around the Town, within the Purcellville planning area. The Citizens' Committee established an Urban Growth Area around the Town that extended approximately one-half mile to the north, south and east of the Town and that was co-terminus with the Town corporate limit to the west. The one-half mile distance was selected by the Citizens' Committee based on their vision for the ultimate size of urbanized Purcellville. The area was also based on the potential for siting pump station locations as determined by watersheds and subwatersheds in the Purcellville planning area since pump stations would be required to serve most of the UGA given the topography of the area and the location of the Town sewer plant.

Therefore, the 1988 Purcellville Urban Growth Area Boundary was defined primarily by natural and topographic features rather than roads or parcel boundaries. Nevertheless, to the greatest extent possible, efforts were made to have the boundary coincide with property boundaries where feasible. The 1988 Purcellville Area Management Plan was completed by the Citizens' Committee and forwarded to the County Planning Commission for review. Completion of the plan was put on hold indefinitely due to other planning priorities, including completion of a new Countywide plan.

### ***The General Plan***

In June 1990, in connection with work on the new Countywide plan, the Loudoun County Planning Commission met with representatives of the Purcellville Town Council and the Purcellville Planning Commission to request that the Town provide the County with input on a Purcellville Urban Growth Area. In July 1990, the County Planning Commission considered six alternative Urban Limit Lines for the Town of Purcellville, including those developed by County Planning Staff, the Town of Purcellville and the original UGA boundary drawn by the Purcellville Citizens' Committee in 1988.

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The County Planning Commission ultimately supported a line that was larger than the 1988 Citizens' Committee line and smaller than the line requested by the Town. This line was subsequently amended in August 1990 to include the remainder of a parcel split by the line. The UGA boundary was amended by the Board of Supervisors in June 1991 at the request of the Town of Purcellville. The Town Council requested the amendment to assure that the boundary would be large enough to accommodate the Town's growth over the next 50 years. As previously noted, the final Purcellville UGA boundary, as endorsed and requested by the Purcellville Town Council, was adopted by the Board of Supervisors when the *General Plan* was adopted in September 1991. A complete description of this boundary is included in Appendix B.

### *C. Relationship to Town and County Planning Documents*

State enabling legislation requires that towns and counties in Virginia adopt and prepare comprehensive plans to promote "coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development...which will best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants." To this end, both the town and the County have adopted comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances which govern land use within their respective jurisdictions. As an incorporated Town, Purcellville independently governs its own land use matters through its Town Council and Planning Commission. Typically, land immediately outside the corporate limits of a town is subject to policies and regulations in the County's comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance. The PUGAMP is unique because it is the first area plan developed and adopted jointly by a town and the County.

The Town's Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1991, does not address land outside its corporate limits. Although the County's *General Plan* provides guidelines for land use in the Purcellville Urban Growth Area, these policies are superseded by the policies included in the PUGAMP. The PUGAMP will be implemented as an element of both the Town's and County's respective comprehensive plans. **Although the PUGAMP sets the blueprint for development in the UGA, the plan does not change existing zoning. Actual implementation of the plan will occur on a case by case basis as individual landowners seek approval for rezonings, special exceptions, subdivisions and site plans.** Property that is annexed by the Town will be subject to the Town's zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance and facilities standards manual, rather than the County's. These documents regulate the type and intensity of land uses and site design, development and construction.

### *D. Community Planning Process*

As previously stated, the Town/County joint annexation agreement specifically required that the Town and the County prepare a joint

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comprehensive plan for the Purcellville Urban Growth Area. The annexation agreement further specified that the plan be prepared by a joint comprehensive plan committee composed of 15 individuals: two members of the Town Planning Commission, two members of the County Planning Commission, five landowners or residents of the County and six landowners or residents of the Town of Purcellville. The Committee was appointed in October 1993 and provided with an inventory of existing conditions in the Purcellville UGA.

The County and the Town were committed to public participation and community involvement during preparation and review of the PUGAMP. Therefore, the joint committee began its work on the plan by holding three public workshops. These workshops were designed to encourage citizens to share their visions of the future for the Urban Growth Area and to ensure that public opinion would help set the fundamental direction of the plan. The Purcellville community meetings were conducted on November 8, November 22, and December 6, 1993. An average of 30 people, including members of the PUGAMP Citizens' Committee, attended and participated in each of the meetings. Over the course of these meetings, planning staff from the County and the Town worked with area residents and landowners to identify what people hope will occur in the Purcellville area and what they foresaw as key issues in the development of the area. The three meetings each had a specific purpose:

**Workshop One:** Citizens were asked to share their vision for the future of the Purcellville area; they were also asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the area and the threats and opportunities that might affect that vision;

**Workshop Two:** Citizens were asked to review *General Plan* policies proposed for the Purcellville UGA and identify needed changes or enhancements;

**Workshop Three:** Citizens were given the opportunity to make comments regarding specific properties or individual concerns and issues.

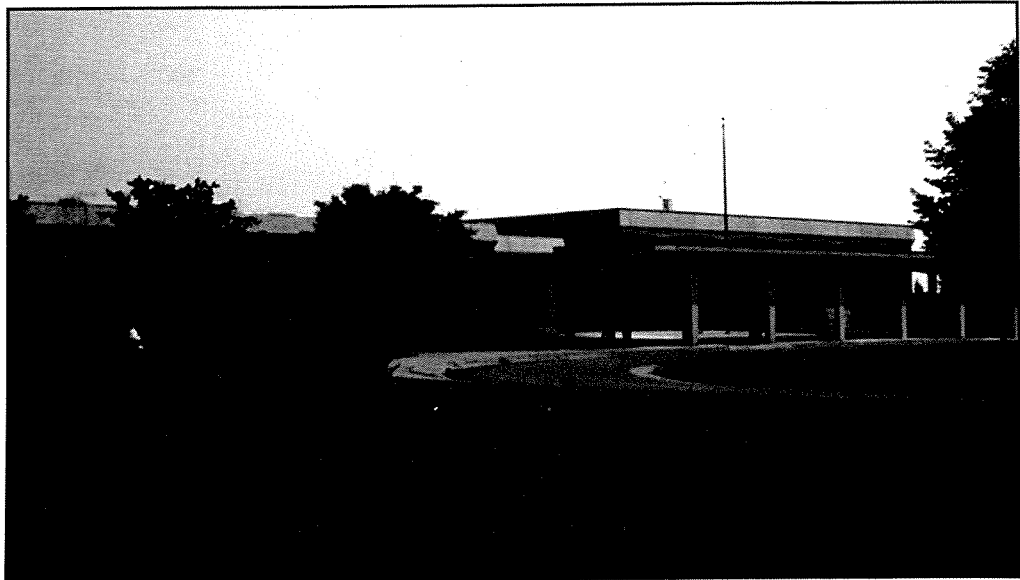
These workshops preceded any policy decisions and are summarized in Appendix C - The *Purcellville Urban Growth Area Management Plan* Community Report.

Following the community workshops, the 15 member joint committee met weekly from January to May 1994 to evaluate information from area residents, landowners, technical advisors, and to review issue papers, evaluate policy options and work with Town and County planning staff to write the actual Plan document. The inventory report prepared for the Committee, issues papers and minutes of each of the meetings are available at the Town offices and the County planning department.

The PUGAMP Citizens' Committee completed plan policies in May 1994 and held a public comment meeting on the draft policies on May 23, 1994. Following review of the comments, the Committee made final revisions to the draft policies and forwarded a final draft plan on June 6, 1994.

Formal review of the draft PUGAMP by the Town and County Planning Commissions began in June 1994. A subcommittee of Town and County Planning Commissioners met in July and presented a revised joint plan to the full Town and County Planning Commissions in September 1994. After a three month hiatus to gather additional information on central sewer and water service options for the UGA, work on the plan resumed in January 1995.

The Town and County Planning Commissions certified a final draft plan on February 28, 1995. The Board of Supervisors and Town Council held a joint public hearing on the certified draft on March 15, 1995. Following the Board and Town Council public hearing, a six member subcommittee of the Board and the Town Council met five times to resolve outstanding issues. On May 4, 1995, the subcommittee forwarded a revised joint draft plan to the Purcellville Town Council and Loudoun County Board of Supervisors with a recommendation of approval. The Plan was adopted by the full Town Council and Board of Supervisors on May 16, 1995 and May 17, 1995, respectively.



*The Community Workshops were held at Blue Ridge Middle School in Purcellville.*

